61. In view of the increasing number of IDPs in the region due to the drought and continuing war in the North, UN agencies have developed a contingency plan of intervention in case the situation worsens. In the context of this worsening scenario, the assistance community would be engaged only in life-saving activities such as: (a) direct relief supplies; (b) provision of potable water; (c) emergency health services; and (d) resettlement.

Emigration to Pakistan

62. As expected, the number of new refugees in Pakistan began to increase in June this year. Between August and October, some 6,800 families were registered crossing at Torkham and Quetta, which is the largest influx of refugees during the last two years. The majority of new arrivals were farmers and labourers from drought and war affected areas in northern Afghanistan. The influx mainly comprises of ethnic minorities, and some Pashtuns. It should be noted, however, that the onset of winter in both 1998 and 1999 also lead to increase in the numbers of families arriving from Kabul.

63. This year, the combined effects of drought and war have hastened the migration. UNHCR figures indicate that three to four times the numbers of new arrivals has been passing through Torkham in recent months compared to previous years. In urban areas, the economy continues to deteriorate, while in rural areas people have been further impoverished by recruitment costs or damage to their livelihoods through war. Some new arrivals cite the ban on poppy growing as a reason for leaving Afghanistan, noting that without poppy their economic prospects are poor. Large numbers of the new arrivals are not seeking support through the assistance community, although many war affected families are doing so in refugee camps in NWFP.

64. On 9 November, the provincial governments of NWFP and Balochistan banned the entry of new arrivals from Afghanistan. This clamp down resulted in a significant build up of increasingly desperate people on the Afghan side of the border. Consequently, the Taliban set up a check point 15 kilometres east of Torkham where they checked the papers of Afghans heading for the border. Because of the border closure, many of the able-bodied Afghans took to the mountains and walked through the unsupervised border areas. On 18 November, Pakistan "streamlined" procedures at Torkham, dropping their demand for documents verifying prior refugee status and asking Afghan men to identify themselves by name. Afghans interviewed after passing through the border indicate that Pakistani border police hound them for money and attempt to maintain order by whipping and beating the entrants.

65. It is expected that new arrivals from drought and conflict areas will continue over the winter as long as weather conditions allow. Some of those who gauged their chances of survival to be poor, and had some assets, have already left their areas of origin. More critical will be the situation of those who have stayed behind due to lack of resources. In addition to the requirements to meet the needs of displaced Afghans inside Afghanistan, there is an equally urgent need to assist new arrivals in neighbouring asylum countries as well as support to ensure that continued access to asylum exists.

SECTORAL OVERVIEWS

Food Security

66. As reported in the WFP/FAO Crop Assessment Survey released in June this year, for the 2000/2001 harvest period there is an estimated shortfall in production of 2.3 million metric tonnes of cereal. The shortfall represents 57% of the national cereal requirement.

67. In addition to the cereal crops, drought has seriously reduced horticultural yields. According to a survey by SCA in July, August, and September in 29 provinces and in 144 villages, orchard yields were down by an average of 49%. In some parts of the country, orchards have dried out, and farmers are uprooting the dead trees and vines and clearing the land for other purposes.

68. The extent that households rely on production and their loss this year are not the only factors determining vulnerability. The combined impact of existing poverty (in many areas associated with last year's drought), level of assets, access to labour markets (internal and external) and other income sources, the purchase price of essential commodities and sale price of assets such as livestock are what will ultimately determine survival this year.

69. The key drought-affected areas in northern, western and central Afghanistan include large parts of Ghor, Badghis, southern Faryab and Saripul and four districts in the Central Highlands (Balkhab, Darra Souf, Sharistan and Dai Kundi). These areas alone represent a total vulnerable population of more than 480,000 people. The drought, however, is widespread and hundreds of thousands more households throughout northern, southern and central areas of the country are facing an unbridgeable gap in resources.

70. As one travels eastward across the north, cereal prices are now beginning to rise above seasonal levels. Mazar-i-Sharif prices are 15% above normal while Faizabad prices are 34% above normal and rapidly rising. Supply *does* appear to be a problem in the Central Highlands where demand at market rates is not adequate incentive for traders to bring food to the area. Prices remain at Kabul rates plus 10%, wheat imports into the area are not keeping up with consumption requirements and, due to the extreme poverty in the region, people are not able to pay more.

71. Livestock is usually the secondary, and sometimes even the primary, livelihood source of Afghan households. Livestock is used by households directly as a food source or is converted to cash to enable households to access the market. It allows households to hedge against inflation, build wealth and insure against economic shocks. The depletion of livestock holdings across the country this year and last has permitted most households to withstand production losses thus far. It is anticipated that the complete liquidation of all livestock holdings will occur well before next year's harvest in the key drought-affected areas.

72. Price indicators reflect the heavy livestock market saturation in the west (Herat) and the southeast (Kandahar), where prices are the lowest in the country. At this time last year sheep and goats were selling for four times as much as this year. The depressed price of livestock is therefore speeding the rate of depletion – in Herat and Kandahar, up to four times as quickly.

73. Throughout the north, west and southeast livestock depletion began early this year several months before this year's harvest in response to the effect of last year's drought. Importantly, the income arising from this large-scale sale of livestock does *not* cover bulk winter buying which normally occurs in October/November. Those surveyed reported that, departing from their usual habit of consuming their own production and carrying out a single winter purchase to cover any shortfall, they have been purchasing cereal since well before the harvest and are now purchasing small amounts on a weekly or biweekly basis.

74. One of the last, and one of the most extreme coping strategies available to households is the out-migration of entire families to areas of relative prosperity, covered elsewhere in this report. The populations that are leaving drought areas are the 'visible vulnerables' that still have the resources for transport. From areas where migration is already underway it is thought that there is a most vulnerable population without resources for transport, who have been forced to stay behind. The drought is so widespread also that the urban 'havens' within Afghanistan are rapidly becoming crisis areas themselves as their ability to absorb the destitute IDPs rapidly diminishes. Finally, it is also not clear if generalisations can be made about population movement as an indicator of distress. Reports from Oxfam in September state that "families in Jawand District, Badghis Province said they would not leave their villages because they felt they had nowhere to go and, even if they thought there was an escape, they felt they had no way of getting there. When asked what they would do, they said they expected to die."

75. As most households are now turning to labour markets for replacement income there is a large number of men presenting themselves for work that have not done so in the past. Only in Jalalabad and Kandahar can an average household with one able-bodied male provide

adequately for *their minimum food needs alone* through urban labour markets. Further polarisation in cereal prices and labour wages, and hence labouring families' food security, can be anticipated as the winter approaches.

76. Determining the level and extent of vulnerability among the drought-affected this year essentially requires an inventory of almost the entire country. WFP is in the process of doing just that starting with the worst affected areas. The picture that is emerging is suggestive of a wide-scale humanitarian disaster: a gradual breakdown of coping strategies throughout large parts of the country may start in February. Still, these results are significant only if they are substantiated by what is happening on the ground. In this regard, the emigration of around 20% or more of the population of Chakhcharan is highly significant because the profile of these people is no worse than the 450,000 others living in the key drought-affected areas. VAM data would suggest that this last-resort response should have occurred later in the year (January/February 2001). According to IDP statements, they chose to move early to avoid being trapped (snowbound) in the winter when food stocks will run out (which is what actually occurred in Chakhcharan in 1971 leading to the starvation deaths of 900 to 2000 people). The unusual and rapid increase in emigration, early signs of market saturation due to distress sales of livestock, increased demand for labour wages, and reports of famine deaths lend weight to the conclusions drawn from the VAM data. WFP will continue surveillance and re-evaluation of the situation in the next eight or nine months left before relief is in sight.

77. The rapidly deteriorating situation now demands the *acceleration* of the present emergency operation (EMOP 6259). Instead of the planned 12 months, WFP Afghanistan intends to fully deliver all emergency resources (117,891 MTs) in 8 months (by the end of March 2001) in order to prevent loss-of-life and large scale population movements.

78. Upon full resourcing of this initial emergency operation, a second EMOP will immediately be submitted for the critical pre-harvest period from 1 April through 31 August 2001.

79. At present, the shortfall in WFP resources for both regular life-saving programme activities and the initial emergency operation amounts to 115,800 MTs. WFP has already committed all resources that have been pledged and can consider new projects only provisionally pending commitment of further resources from donors. Unless additional pledges are received in the next month WFP Afghanistan will run out of food in February next year and a humanitarian crisis will be unavoidable.

Preventive Health

80. Although worse problems with diarrhoeal disease and cholera were expected this year due to the drought, there were in fact fewer problems in the urban areas and more outbreaks in the remote rural areas.

81. Health facilities in Kabul reported 4,781 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease to WHO Kabul in July. The number is far less than the number of cases reported last year in the same month. The surveillance system run by the MoPH in Kabul collects data from major health facilities and disseminates the information to all health supporting agencies. No cholera cases were reported in the central region throughout the summer.

82. Water chlorination has been conducted in some areas of Kabul City where the surveillance system provided information about the increasing number of diarrhoea cases. The Task Force chlorinated 18,841 shallow wells in Kabul City in July. 144 water samples from reservoirs and 864 from shallow wells were collected and tested for residual chlorine. In Jalalabad, WHO in collaboration with the Regional Health Directorate, chlorinated about 1,300 shallow wells every week during the summer season.

Cholera Outbreaks

83. WHO collaborated with MoPH, UNICEF, MSF, and other NGOs in the response to several reported outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea in the northwestern and southern parts of the country. Missions were sent to Ghormach District of Badghis Province, Saripul District of

Jowzjan Province, and Dand District of Kandahar Province. Teams of medical doctors took medical supplies to the areas to investigate and control the outbreaks. The cholera outbreak in Saripul Province subsequently travelled to Shibergan City (15 August) in Jowzjan Province.

- 49 deaths were reported from villages before medical supplies reached the area.
- 315 cases and 8 deaths have been reported from Saripul Hospital.
- 66 cases and 2 deaths have been reported from Jowzjan Hospital in Shibergan.

84. The North Regional Task Force including MoPH, UNICEF, MSF, and WHO has been active in investigating and controlling the outbreaks, chlorinating the water supply and providing hygiene education in the affected areas. Stool samples collected during separate missions to Sozma Qala and Shibergan and analysed at National Health Institute (NIH) in Islamabad were found positive for cholera organisms.

85. A double outbreak in the Western Region was reported from the contiguous districts of Murghab and Ghormach in Badghis Province. Both districts are on the border with Turkmenistan, in remote, under-served and insecure areas. Ghormach has reported 50 deaths from dehydration before the Task Force mission arrived and specimens from affected cases tested positive for cholera organisms at NIH.

86. The Western Regional Task Force, consisting of MoPH, MSF, UNICEF and WHO sent several missions to the affected districts to investigate and control the outbreak. There are no existing health facilities, but MSF set up cholera treatment centres in both districts. UNICEF has assisted in chlorinating the water supply and all agencies of the Task Force have provided supplies and labour for the response.

87. In Hazarajat, there was a suspected out break in Yakawlang District of an unknown infectious disease causing fever, headache, vomiting, and death in some cases. The environmental situation is very poor; this is a drought affected area with little food, no safe drinking water and extremely poor sanitation and hygiene. 613 persons including children and adults were reported to have been affected. The death toll was 15 persons. Tests indicate that this was an unusual outbreak of falciparum malaria. A medical team and medical supplies were provided for ongoing case management in this remote area.

88. In September and October, the IDP situation around Herat City reached its peak, and the mortality rate was reported as 0.73/10,000 persons per day. Co-ordinated efforts to provide food, shelter and safe water were key to improving the situation and averting a full-blown cholera outbreak when some cases were identified. MSF input in setting up a cholera treatment centre also had an appreciable preventive impact.

Water and Environmental Sanitation

89. As previously experienced, the water table continues to drop in many areas of the country due to insufficient recharge of underground aquifers. More than 30% of all safe drinking water sources in the country have run dry, and in some districts, more than half of drinking water sources have been affected, including wells and canal or rainfall run-off filled surface reservoirs. Many people have manually deepened wells, while those who can afford it have drilled new deep wells. With falling water levels groundwater quality is, however, in places becoming too saline to be potable. In the south and the east, excess pumping of ground water from deep aquifers for agricultural purposes has affected nearby shallow wells that have now gone dry.

90. Those communities dependent on surface water and living at the end of water chains have been seriously affected as, in many cases, water has simply not reached their areas - e.g. southern Shamali where deaths, through shortages of water, of many of the vineyards in southern Shamali have been reported; northern Faryab, etc., where water supplies have been exhausted upstream and where groundwater sources, even for drinking water, are now unavailable.

91. Water shortages, as well as agricultural failure, have resulted in out-migration from the worst affected areas toward urban areas. In many areas, communities, while not having left,

are travelling long distances on a daily basis to collect water. Such urban movement has exacerbated water, sanitation, and health problems in the urban areas in Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif, and concentrated the food, shelter, and water needs of these populations in areas already under stress. With this scenario emerging, all assistance efforts, insofar as possible, have been oriented towards attempting to stabilise communities in their areas of origin.

92. In both urban and rural areas through out the country, a wide array of assistance programmes by both UN agencies and NGOs is going forward to ameliorate water supply problems, including installing hand pumps, drilling, improving, and deepening wells, tankering water to rural communities to refill underground reservoirs, spring, karez and canal cleaning, chlorinating wells, etc. Funding constraints have, however, restricted activities in a number of areas. As environmental sanitation is of paramount concern specifically in urban areas - due to the increased possibility of contamination of water sources and the increased incidence of disease - attention has been focused on latrine construction, the collecting solid waste, etc.

Livelihoods

93. The majority (85%) of the people living in Afghanistan depends directly or indirectly on agriculture as the basis for their livelihoods. Two issues are crucial to enable the population in Afghanistan to return to a productive life in agriculture once the drought is over:

(1) availability of sufficient seed and other planting material to restart crop production
(2) availability of sufficient animal breeding stock to build up livestock numbers

The Seed Situation

94. As has been highlighted previously the drought has compounded the existing problem of seed quality and availability in Afghanistan, something that is obviously critical in terms of the country's agricultural rehabilitation. The country now faces, in essence, a seed famine, with limited quantities of quality seed being accessible and a generalised dependence on degraded existing stocks.

95. Seed quality is generally poor, especially for rainfed wheat. Most of the seed produced this year - which is presently being sowed due to the absence of any other alternative - is substandard. Many areas produced material that is unfit for use as seed. Whether rainfall is adequate this winter or not, yields from the 2001 harvest will be highly reduced by seed quality alone.

96. Additional factors will also affect the coming year's harvest. Many areas will remain unplanted due to out-migration, unwillingness to risk losing existing stocks, seed shortage, draught-power shortages, etc. It is estimated that approximately up to 20% of agricultural land, both irrigated and rainfed, may be left unplanted this year, and this area will obviously increase if there are no winter rains. Production may also be affected by an increasing risk aversion being demonstrated by farmers in rainfed areas -many are unwilling to plant precious seeds now, despite early November rains, due to fears of poor winter rains, and will wait until after the winter. Furthermore, with the increasing poverty in rural areas, and the increasing level of selling-off of assets, the ability of farmers to buy inputs - or to borrow them, as was traditionally the case -, even if they were available, is extremely limited.

97. Regrettably, financial constraints restrict planning for next year, and have affected the production of quality declared seed this year. In 2001, it is planned to produce 6000MT, through the WFP Food for Seed programme, which is then treated by FAO, with the direct support of a number of donors. Enough breeder seed does exist, however, to produce up to 10,000MT in 2001 though funding problems continue to inhibit this.

98. In many areas critical interventions for the coming year will include increased distribution of improved seeds, the distribution of input packages (seed, fertiliser and draught power if necessary - many communities will have sold or consumed their draught oxen by the end of the winter) in the worst affected areas, and the provision of drought-resistant crops. Many

areas, most specifically the marginal rainfed areas so badly affected by the drought, will require additional support to assist their recovery. Funding, however, continues to restrict the scale of these interventions.

Livestock

99. The impact of the drought on livestock and the livelihoods of livestock owners, both kuchis and sedentary populations, throughout the country has been widely discussed: widespread reduction in herd sizes due to death (especially of young animals) or sale, widespread borrowing of funds to purchase feed, wide-ranging movements to find alternative pasturage and water, increased levels of livestock disease, etc. Large numbers of animals have been sent to Pakistan, to Quetta, Peshawar, and Chitral. Livestock and meat prices have fallen accordingly.

100. To investigate the impacts of drought, an FAO team carried out a survey of 920 kuchi families between 15 September and 15 October of kuchis in Kandahar (124), Zabul (237), Ghazni (224), Farah (228), Nimroz (37) and Helmand (73). The results of the survey show the following:

- The average flock size has decreased this year from an average of 166.2 sheep and 51.9 goats to 63.0 sheep and 25.3 goats.
- Kuchis lost 42% of their adult sheep and 35% of goats through death and sold another 20% and 16% of sheep and goats.
- The losses for lambs and kids were 78% and 71%, respectively, and few young animals could be sold (7% and 6% for lambs and kids).
- 23% of the camels belonging to kuchis died.
- 88% of the interviewed kuchis have borrowed money and will purchase feed (87%); most (77%) have sold more animals than in normal years.
- Transfer to different grazing places (48%) and efforts to find other jobs (31%) have helped some kuchis cope.
- Few kuchis have received support from outside for their livestock so far. The more important fields of support were feed (9%) and transport (4%).
- Needs for future support were ranked by kuchi families on a scale from 1 to 5, the higher value showing greater needs. As more than 63% reported malnutrition and 45.8% infertility of their livestock, it is not surprising that the highest demand was for concentrates for livestock (4.81) followed by human food (4.68) and roughage (3.82).
- Demand for veterinary assistance like vaccines (3.18) and treatment for internal parasites (3.17) and for medical support (2.75) was moderate. No strong demand was expressed for assistance through transport of livestock (1.97) and technical advice (1.77).
- Although not specifically asked 45.4% of the interviewees reported lack of drinking water as an important problem.

101. As fodder has been the critical issue in the south and centre of the country, targeted feeding of animals has been carried out in Bamyan, Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgon, Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Ghazni, Paktia, and Paktika provinces. Additional special feeding programmes for selected breeding animals (using Urea-Molasses blocks and concentrates) have also been established. However, the amounts that have been possible to distribute are far below that which is required.

102. It is critical to maintain basic livestock capital throughout the drought period so that it will be possible to re-build herds, flocks and livelihoods in the future. Communities that have lost heavily will require assistance with re-stocking. Additionally it is critical to reinvigorate the veterinary sector - both vaccination and treatment -as outbreaks such as anthrax traditionally follow severe drought. At present, therefore, the emphasis is on prevention of infectious animal diseases, in particular of trans-boundary animal diseases and diseases with public health implications (zoonoses). Before the current drought, Afghan livestock owners were willing to pay for animal health services from Veterinary Field Units. However, with increasing poverty because of the drought their capacity to pay for these services will have been considerably reduced.

103. The conflict in northeastern Afghanistan is also affecting the kuchis in that region which had been spared the extreme effects of the drought as experienced in the south. The majority of those who traditionally move from Kunduz and Takhar to Badakhshan in the summer over-winter in areas that have become front lines. It remains to be seen how they, and their livelihoods, will fare, though large-scale liquidation of livestock assets is already occurring (largely because of fodder shortages).

CONCLUSION

104. Virtually all WFP Afghanistan's pledged resources have been committed and the agency is unable to consider any additional projects except for those currently in the present crisis areas. This leaves a large number of 'severely drought affected' areas unsupported. In addition, as noted in the regional overviews above, there are also major gaps in provision of non-food items for the displaced (US$ 1.1 million) as well as cash for FoodAC (US$ 3.6 million).

105. Of the total US$ 221m requested by the Consolidated Appeal for 2000, US$ 106.8m has been contributed representing 48 % of total needs. In addition to funds pledged against the Appeal 2000, funding has been provided to address the needs identified in the middle of the year created by the drought. Of the US$67m requested, donors have contributed US$45m. Much of this amount is in response to the urgent food aid requirements. It has been a great concern that support for other critical interventions to mitigate against, as well as to address, problems caused by drought have not been responded to either in the Appeal 2000 or as presented in the drought appeal.

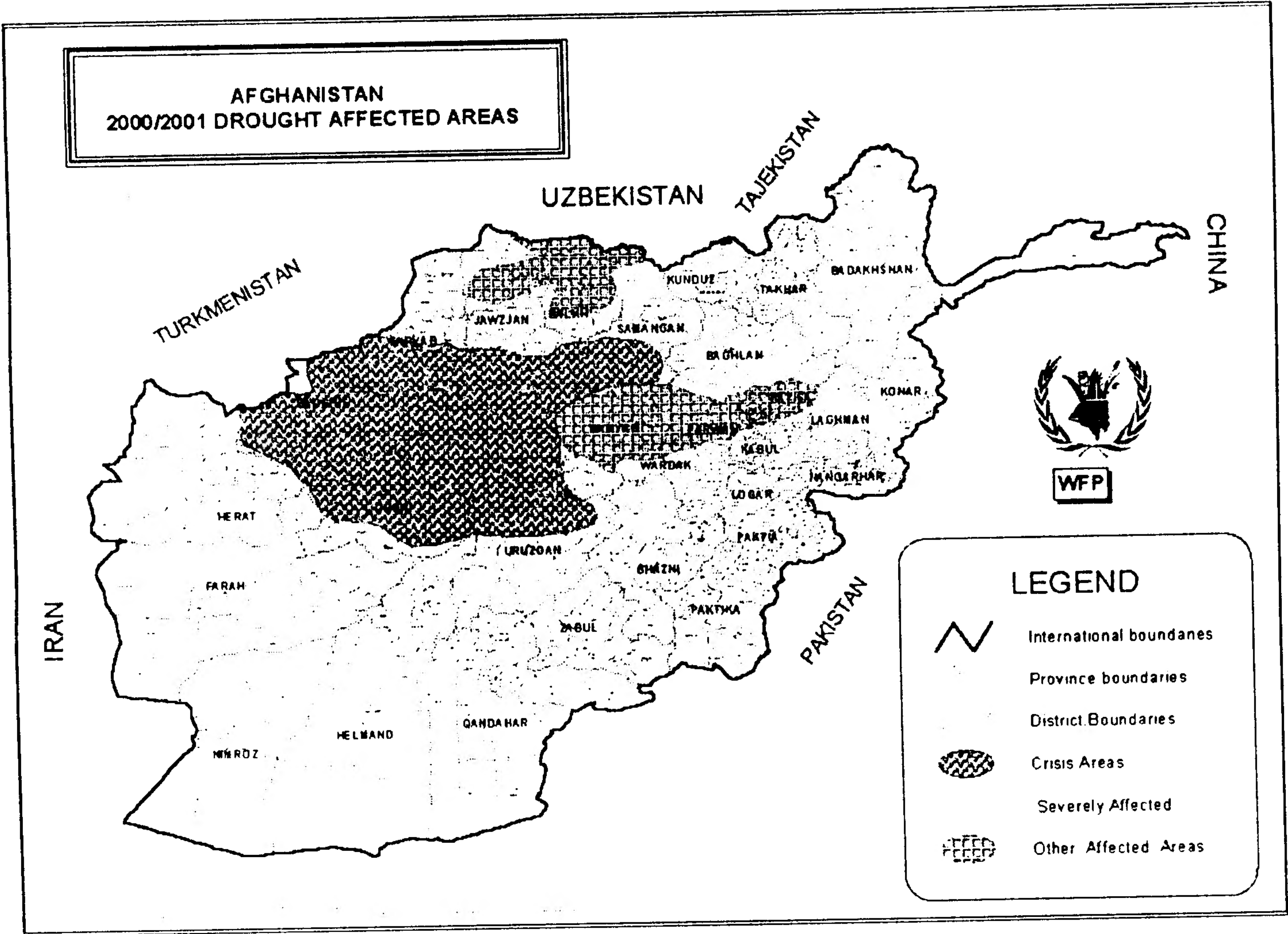
106. In the 2001 Appeal, funding for drought mitigation activities is not disaggregated but is subsumed within all assistance strategies. It is well recognised that the assistance requested through the Appeal is minimal in relation to the overall assistance needed by the people of Afghanistan. The depth of deprivation and poverty in Afghanistan and the limited opportunities for Afghans themselves to address their needs demands that the international community gear up their assistance to the country and in ways that help to bridge the massive development deficit. The assistance community, by virtue of its limited capacity and means has, by necessity, presented the minimum set of activities that can be implemented during 2001.

107. As noted in the beginning of this paper, the capacity of the assistance community to ameliorate the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is limited, and will be even more restricted if necessary resources are not forthcoming.



Drought and Displacement in Afghanistan

1 December 2000





> *"Families in Jawand District, Badghis Province said they would not leave their villages because they felt they had nowhere to go and, even if they thought there was an escape, they felt they had no way of getting there. When asked what they would do, they said they expected to die." (Oxfam)*

INTRODUCTION

1. The drought in Afghanistan is *not* over. On the contrary, as the assistance community has said from the onset of the drought, the effects of the drought are deepening now and are expected to worsen before next summer, even if adequate winter rains fall.

2. During autumn 2000, there have been population movements of upwards of 200,000 people because of both drought and conflict. Some have fled to border areas or across the borders of Afghanistan, while others have been flocking to already over-stretched cities within Afghanistan. One major concern of the assistance community has been that these movements both within and beyond Afghanistan are not as big as what might have been expected given the scale of the problem. Hence, it is widely believed that those who had the wherewithal to emigrate have done so, while those who have been left behind lack the resources to leave and may well comprise the most vulnerable of the population.

3. The water situation has continued to deteriorate due to inadequate re-charge of aquifers. In the health sector, despite outbreaks of cholera in various areas, the situation has not deteriorated to the extent feared, but it is likely to deteriorate dramatically over the winter months. As people grow weaker on a marginal diet--especially children and the elderly--more will perish, if not from outright starvation then from common respiratory diseases.

4. In addition to water, sanitation, and health problems, Afghans will experience a sharp deterioration in household food security until at least next summer. Well targeted food aid programmes to reach communities in their areas of origin, in addition to programmes addressing emergency needs of the displaced, have helped to ameliorate the situation of many Afghans. The same cannot be said for assistance to the agricultural sector, whether in livestock or seeds, where funding has simply not been forthcoming. This lack will have profound consequences for the next crop, as farmers simply do not have enough seeds to plant, and their livestock resources are fast depleting. In addition, the Taliban ban on poppy cultivation, welcome as it may be to the outside world, represents a serious threat to the livelihoods of many Afghan farmers who cannot plant wheat because they have no seeds, no irrigation, no credit, or inadequate land.

5. In short, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is in a sharp downwards spiral that will continue until at least next summer. The capacity of the assistance community to ameliorate the situation is limited, and will be even more restricted if necessary resources are not forthcoming. The world community should acknowledge the fact now that even with additional resources, assistance agencies in Afghanistan will have to engage in humanitarian triage while attempting to save as many lives as possible.

REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

Northeast Afghanistan

6. In the north-east, rainfed areas of northern Takhar were the worst affected by drought, producing negligible cereal harvests in many areas, with the rest of the province being moderately affected, including irrigated areas. In Badakhshan, rainfed areas in the north and northwest were moderately affected. Given that these areas are chronically food deficit, even small reductions in production have had serious ramifications. Additionally, yield reductions in Takhar mean that this province's ability to feed food deficit Badakhshan was seriously compromised. This reduction in supply, coupled with import problems - virtually no wheat is entering the area from Central Asia - and cross-line food blockades from Taleban-controlled areas and Pakistan have naturally exacerbated the provincial and regional food deficit.

7. As predicted, the seed crisis has materialised. By the time of planting of autumn wheat many farmers in the rainfed areas had stocks insufficient for consumption let alone for planting, and consequently did not plant. In addition, many of those who are planting are using poor quality seed. A loan crisis has also ensued; farmers are able to neither repay past loans nor obtain new consumption or seed loans.

8. The livestock market continues to decline. As predicted for November, a fodder shortage has occurred, occasioning large scale liquidation of livestock assets, including horses, with a resultant fall in meat prices. Furthermore, the conflict is now having a serious effect on the kuchi population. The majority in north-eastern Afghanistan over-winter in Takhar and northern Kunduz, areas which are presently front lines. It is expected that, due to fodder shortages and inability to return to traditional winter villages, herds will be seriously depleted after winter.

9. Additionally, the casual agricultural and rural labour market has been seriously depressed by the agricultural collapse (i.e. no harvest-related labour and a related contraction of the economy of many of the rural areas). The urban labour market has in turn suffered due to the reduced level of internal and import trade.

10. By early autumn the impact of the drought had been seriously exacerbated by conflict, which has resumed in some of the worst affected areas of northern Takhar, both from which and into which large scale displacement occurred. These areas were some of those areas that had been badly affected by the conflict of autumn 1999 and which had seen widespread destruction of property, infrastructure, assets, and livelihoods. Their populations were consequently among the most vulnerable in the country. By mid-November 13,000 families, up to 80,000 people, were known to be displaced within the region. To compound matters further, the main import route, through Ai Khanum in north Takhar, was blocked due to the conflict, which inhibited imports of food and, critically, fuel. By November, the cost of one seer (7kilos) of wheat in Faizabad had increased from Afs 260,000 in October to Afs 370,000, and fuel had increased by a factor of four with a knock-on effect on all other goods.

11. A co-ordinated, multi-agency strategy was developed for Badakhshan and Takhar in early summer, with activities being planned to cover geographic areas of established high and moderate drought impact.

12. A policy decision was taken to avoid free wheat distribution and to focus on Food for Work activities. This was a result of poor experience of free distribution in the area in the past, an emerging and very positive experience of community-implemented FFW activities, an existing FFW programme which would have been undermined by other strategies, and the request of the authorities - at the highest level - to support FFW activities and to avoid free distributions unless unavoidable. This strategy was appropriate and has been successful.

13. By early November, 4,800 MT of wheat specifically for drought-affected areas had been delivered through community-implemented projects, mostly road construction or rehabilitation activities. An additional 1590 MT is in the process of being delivered through drought-response projects by NGOs, again mostly focusing on road infrastructure. These activities complement an existing 6,000 MT food aid programme.

14. The worst affected areas of Badakhshan have been fully covered, specifically Yaftal, Ragh, Shar-I Buzurg, Argu, Keshem, and Faizabad. It is clear that these activities have alleviated pressures contributing to emigration from many of the hinterland areas to Faizabad, and have relieved pressure in the Faizabad area by providing work for the urban workforce. Additional cross-border distributions from Tajikistan by the NGO Focus will target the traditionally food insecure border districts (from which there is a long-standing tradition of long-range internal and external labour migration, both of which have been affected by the combined effects of the drought and the conflict).

15. As noted, large-scale population displacement has occurred from severely drought-affected areas into other severely drought-affected areas. To alleviate emergency needs 1,450 MT of wheat, additional to that above, was provided to IDPs as free distributions, as were quantities of non-food items. This will not cover all food needs, nor is it expected to last for even two months. A number of agencies are attempting to provide food assistance to complement the wheat provided by WFP but with little success so far.

16. In terms of seed procurement activities, existing NGO activities continued. Twenty-five MT were procured in Keshem by UNOPS using wheat for seed swap. The scale, however, has obviously not been large enough to satisfy needs.

17. There have been several constraints and gaps in the inter-agency response. Coverage in Takhar, the worst affected area, was restricted due to conflict in certain areas and funding problems in others. Agencies in both Badakhshan and Takhar are having difficulties in accessing funding for FFW projects. A critical gap in the response strategy has been the absence of a large-scale improved seed production and distribution project, specifically targeting rainfed areas - a total of only 25MT extra of seed will be procured this year in response to the drought, and most of that will be irrigated seed. In addition, further attention needs to given to small- and medium-scale irrigation infrastructure repair and livestock vaccination campaigns.

Shelter needs

18. Heavy snow and rain fall has occurred throughout the region during early November, accompanied by a severe drop in temperature. Plans are still being drawn up by ACTED to build hard shelters for those in Takhar, though this will be complicated by the weather unless the rain abates, and by SNI to assist local families to continue to host IDPs. Funding will be required for these activities. Failing the construction of hard shelter, tents will be provided though it is accepted that these will be inadequate due to the likely severity of the winter in this area.

19. MSF and ACTED in Faizabad, and ACTED and SNI in Takhar, are looking into providing heaters and fuel for both those under soft shelter and those in public buildings, though funding may be a constraint. ACTED has submitted a proposal to UNOCHA for funding to winterise public buildings in Faizabad. MSF will look into winterising schools.

On the border with Tajikistan

20. An inter-agency assessment mission travelled to Kumsangir and Pianj districts at the Tajik-Afghan border on 11-13 November 2000 to assess the situation of Afghan IDPs/refugees.

21. In Kumsangir, about 1500 displaced families, most from Imam-Sahib and some from Dashti Archi, are living on an island along Pianj River. Food, which the IDPs/refugees brought from their villages, is fast depleting. The health status of the IDPs was fair, although a few children seemed to be undernourished. Overall, however, the living and shelter conditions of the IDPs are poor.

22. In Pianj, there are 400 families, and 90 fighters are living amongst them. The refugees come from Kalbot, Khwajagar, Kartok, Hazarbagh, and Tazalaqai in Kunduz and Takhar provinces. Food, which the IDPs/refugees brought from their villages, is coming to an end. Living conditions are poor. The IDP/refugees have built reed huts and clusters of 4 to 5 families live in one place. Very few roofs are water resistant. Children have poor clothing and there is a need for blankets and shoes. The IDPs/refugees are concerned that it will be very difficult for them to survive over the winter.

23. The status of the affected people is unclear, as the border is not demarcated. Some are IDPs, while some are indeed refugees. The realities of the situation place the group in a type of 'no-man's land'. Most of the IDP/refugees are actually the families and kin of Northern Alliance fighters. They have been on the island since the loss of Imam Sahib, Khwajaghar and the adjoining area, often going back and forth. The mission found that there is a need to assess in-depth the specific circumstances of the vulnerable for limited interventions. Consideration is being given to moving these displaced families to a more secure area further away from the frontlines where some assistance could be provided.

Northern Afghanistan

24. Of the total regional population of over 5 million, drought and/or armed conflict threaten approximately 60-70%, while an estimated 25 percent of the total population in severely drought affected areas is at risk of starvation according to WFP. Areas classified as crisis points by WFP/VAM include south and central Faryab, Saripul, south Balkh, and Samangan. Wheat yields dropped this year by 65% in rain fed areas and by 30% in irrigated areas com-

pared to 1999, while herd size decreased by 70-80%. Poor families continue to liquidate assets. The daily wage labour rate has fallen in worst affected districts to as low as 1 kilo of wheat compared to a pre-drought norm of 7 kilos per day. 70-85% of all rock cisterns (kandahs) and 40-50% of all wells are dry, forcing people to emigrate and/or fetch water from 30-40 kilometres away. The first rain of the winter has not provided enough precipitation for planting winter crops.

25. Wide scale hunger, coupled with armed conflict, has induced population movements of up to 13,000-15,000 families (91,000-105,000 persons) in search of bare survival. Of the total IDP families in the region, an estimated 4,000 families (28,000 persons) are war IDPs. Of this displaced population, some 6,000-7,000 families (42,000-49,000 persons) live in public buildings and/or semi-destroyed structures, makeshift camps and abandoned houses. The rest are accommodated and hosted by local families, whose resources are rapidly shrinking.

26. Meanwhile, fighting in Kunduz and Takhar provinces has reduced drastically people's survival options in these areas. Some of the conflict-affected areas are also severely hit by the drought.

27. Food insecurity and severe shortage of water for humans, animals, and crops continue to threaten the survival of a large population of the region. In severely hit districts in Saripul, Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh and Samangan, prices of wheat, meat, and diesel continue to rise steadily and are twice as high as last year, while wages and employment opportunities are down. Drought has resulted in large-scale displacement from southern Faryab, Jowzjan, Saripul, Balkh, and Samangan into districts of Balkh, Baghlan, and Kunduz provinces. Recent studies by MSF/Belgium to assess the nutrition status of children, both displaced and non-displaced, provide evidence that malnutrition is emerging as a serious problem among children and lactating and pregnant women. Given the scale of displacement and the impact of the drought, assistance does not cover even a fraction of the need.

28. The situation is likely to worsen during the winter. Already reports of children dying due to hunger and cold are being received: seven are reported to have died in IDP camps in Chimtal in November, four in a make-shift camp in Old Baghlan, and three in Pul-i-Khumri. MSF/B has established Supplementary Feeding Centres. While food for work and FOODAC programmes of WFP and ICRC have contributed in halting the displacement, they remain inadequate in ensuring minimum nutritional standards of children and childbearing age group of women. An immediate increase in assistance is required to avert a serious human tragedy. Nearly 90% of the regional population may lack access to sufficient food until October-November 2001.

29. Wheat delivered through food for work programmes run chiefly by WFP and ICRC has also greatly helped to reduce displacement and hunger-induced deaths. WFP alone has delivered 9,476 MT since June this year (reaching 860,233 beneficiaries compared to the total population of over 5 million persons) and plans to deliver another 20,530 MT over the next four months (till March 2001) when its allocation would be exhausted. However, the quantity of seed that is provided and/or available for winter crop is a fraction of the requirement.

30. Despite the success of National Immunisation Days (NIDs), insufficient routine childhood immunisation is being provided, e.g. against measles. Under the current circumstances, where large-scale poverty and hunger are producing severe and moderate levels of malnutrition, and a large population forced to live in very congested and crowded space due to displacement, measles are likely to occur, as has already happened in southern Faryab. Over 41% of the confirmed cases of measles in south Faryab are reported to be among children between 5-15 years, which points to the need for measles vaccination for children up to 15 years. In response, UNICEF in collaboration with MSF and SCA will provide vaccine and equipment for immunisation campaigns in December for children between six months and fifteen years in southern Faryab and parts of Takhar province where a substantial number of IDPs have moved. Cholera was reported in parts of Kunduz province, especially Khanabad where there is a high concentration of IDPs from Banghi valley, and WHO has reported that Acute Respiratory Infection cases are on the rise and are expected to worsen,

31. In short, there is evidence to support the argument that the crisis is growing in this region, which inevitably would result in displacement, famine, and death if levels of assistance are not substantially increased. In addition to food, including supplementary feeding, non-food items, sanitation, and water are required.

Central Region

32. No massive movements of drought-related IDPs have been observed in the Central Region in the past three months. With food reserves decreasing and cold weather approaching, however, more people have been reported moving, mainly to Pakistan. Food assistance through FOODAC projects has contributed, to a certain extent, to preventing massive population movements in the region, especially from the areas most severely affected by the drought. Considering the limited amount of assistance available compared to the actual needs in the region, not all affected populations could be adequately covered.

33. For the majority of the population of the Central Region, food insecurity continues to increase, and is expected to worsen during the coming months for several reasons: poor harvests and already exhausted food reserves, depletion of marketable assets, a harsh winter, and limited access to markets and relief supplies as the roads become impassable.

34. For the population of the Shamali plains and Panjshir Valley, the above problems are compounded by the presence of the frontline, the tense political/security situation, and fears of renewed fighting. A slow but steady influx of families from Shamali to Kabul has been reported in the past few weeks. This influx appears to be much higher than usual in autumn, probably the result of the latest shift of military alliances in Shamali and alarming rumours about new fighting, but also because food is becoming scarcer in the plains). In a recent assessment carried out in the southern Panjshir and Shamali plains, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) found "malnutrition rates... the worst...since 1996, cities and countryside together." This includes global rates of 18.2% in under fives and 29.3% in under two and a half years. Results above 20% are classified as "undoubtedly high and indicating a serious situation, while > 40% represent a severe crisis.

35. The newly arriving families usually are accommodated with relatives in the city. Although a number of relief programmes for vulnerable people (including IDPs) are being implemented in the city, it is difficult to identify and include the ever-increasing number of widely spread vulnerable population. It is to be noted that a number of aid programmes in Kabul target the vulnerable population, which includes both newly and previously displaced families. Of these, the largest is WFP's bakery project.

36. An increase in the number of admissions of moderately and severely malnourished children has been reported by feeding centres in the region in recent months. A rise in malnutrition is common in the summer months due to increased incidence of diarrhoea, but an expected reduction in food intake during the difficult winter months ahead will make children even more vulnerable to malnutrition and diseases.

37. Hospital records already show an increasing incidence of acute respiratory infections. This is not unusual during the cold season, but it is anticipated that this year the situation will be much more severe as many families will not be able to meet their food intake requirements; neither will they be able to afford adequate heating facilities or access to health care. The weakest family members (children under five, lactating mothers and the elderly) will be most severely affected.

38. The situation of the population in the region in terms of food security, health, displacement etc. will continue to deteriorate in the coming six months. All WFP food for the region has been fully committed to various programmes. Unless more food becomes available within the next 2-4 months, the assistance community will be unable to respond effectively to the needs of an increasingly vulnerable population.

Western Afghanistan

39. The drought currently affecting western Afghanistan has put at risk the lives of approximately 50,000 families (300,000 people). With crop losses averaging 75% and 50% reduction in livestock assets, food security in the region has been seriously jeopardised. As elsewhere, some vulnerable families with resources to do so have opted to leave their homes of origin for urban areas, notably Herat City. With the implementation of a food aid programme to assist families in their places of origin in Ghor, Badghis, Herat, and Farah Provinces, arrivals to Herat slowed. However, the area of distress is now starting to enlarge and reports are being received of displaced persons moving to other areas of western Afghanistan in search of assistance. Moreover, even assisted areas have received aid to carry them only through early spring. In Badghis, MSF has been monitoring malnutrition rates among under fives since June and have noted that combined moderate and severe malnutrition rates are 23%.

40. After this slow down, displaced families continued to arrive in Herat City and are expected to continue as long as the weather allows. Because of displacement to Herat, the city's labour market has declined dramatically. The City, like Kandahar, is one of the two most economically active in the country. It is within a day's drive of two international trading partners (Iran and Turkmenistan) with access to cheap goods including the cheapest wheat in the country (Kazakh imports). Border crossing into Iran is much more difficult but there are still tens of thousands of Afghan migrant workers absorbed in Iran. These factors served to make Herat the most affluent city in the country with the strongest labour markets as recently as seven months ago. Now, however, Herat is unable to keep pace with the increasing strain being placed on it by a desperate rural population. Newcomers to the labour market are, by far, the highest in the country (77%), availability of labour lowest (36%), and the fall in 'real' value of earning from last year the largest (49%).

41. There are currently 7,600 families spread among six camps in Herat, most of who have few assets and therefore are in need of both food and non-food items. Women, children, and the elderly comprise about 62% of this displaced population. Food distribution is going on in the camps, along with CSB provision. However, most food resources are currently being used in a FFW programme to build mud shelters for the displaced, which is benefiting 1,100 workers. So far, 480 shelters out of the required 4,000 have been completed. While some non-food items are in stock, the assistance community notes shortfalls of all non-food items, including blankets, tents, quilts and other supplies.

42. Each camp has a functioning health unit. With the advent of cold weather, they are monitoring the incidence of and mortality rates from respiratory disease, which has so far killed over 20 people. According to MSF, the incidence of malnutrition is 15%, and efforts to conduct a comprehensive nutritional survey are underway. In addition, water and sanitation needs in the camps are being addressed.

Hazarajat

43. Hazarajat is heading towards another very difficult winter. Many of the people who have stayed on in Hazarajat this autumn are people who would have migrated had they possessed the resources to get out. So far, 10,677 people were monitored leaving Hazarajat from 15 September to 28 October. This is now a major exodus; if it accelerates and continues until late December, about 25,000 to 30,000 people will have left the region in the autumn.

44. 6,989 MT of wheat and rice were trucked into Hazarajat over the past six weeks, including WFP trucking, private movements and traders. This figure is far below what would be expected if the market were moving to supply the food deficit. It represents about 17% of what should be moving per month to supply the region. Imported grain is reaching areas that have never bought much before, but the market is not supplying anything like what it should to compensate for the shortage of food. Roads are generally open so the most likely explanation seems to be lack of purchasing power - traders will only supply wheat if they know someone can afford to buy it.

45. Exodus of animals continues; 44,591 sheep and 4045 cows were monitored leaving Hazarajat over the six week period. Overall, this is probably not beyond the sustainable level of sales; however, the August/September survey showed that significant numbers of people had already sold their last animal, including an estimate that as many of 40% of the population in Darra Souf are in this predicament. As for crops, this summer FAO, together with communities and the NGO Solidarites procured 600 tons of improved, high yielding wheat seeds. During September and October, 550 tons of this seed have been redistributed to farmers for planting this autumn or next spring. The seed will cover 4,400 hectares and will yield, if nature co-operates, about 13,000 tons of wheat. In addition, with ECHO funding of $350,000 750 tons of high quality seed will be distributed to farmers this coming spring and next autumn.

46. IAM figures on malnutrition in Lal show a high level of child malnutrition. There is some evidence of a recent increase in malnutrition, which is not however conclusive. IAM's village visits over the past six months throughout Lal district show 39% child malnutrition by arm circumference (up 10 percentage points on last year's figures); and 29% on weight based measures (up 2 percentage points on last year's figures). Clinic screening shows 23.4% on weight based measures, down 1.1 percentage point relative to last year. The epidemics in the area (measles, whooping cough, and meningitis) have been contributory factors in the malnutrition rates, but the main point remains that autumn-malnourished children will be very vulnerable in winter/spring.

47. The 17,000 MT of food assistance that is going into Hazarajat already is an increase on previous years. However, if the food gap is as high as WFP and local people believe, this quantity of aid is inadequate to prevent a disaster. The prognosis for winter is not good. Severe food shortages are expected in the winter and spring and particularly in isolated, snowbound areas, will be accompanied by famine deaths. The worst affected districts are ones with severe drought effects, relatively low aid deliveries, remote from markets, and continuing market/road disruption or opposition activity. The districts with the largest concentration of vulnerable people are Sharistan, Daikondi, Lal o Sarjangal, Balkhab, and Darra Souf.

48. The poor, isolated rural communities in Hazarajat are familiar with spring famines, when food stocks finish by the end of the long winter, and people have to survive on reduced rations, famine foods, and distress borrowing. As winter 2000/2001 approaches, agencies working in Hazarajat are trying to assess how severe the forthcoming winter/spring famine will be.

Southern Afghanistan

49. The 2000 drought was only the most recent in three successive bad years. People coped by borrowing from relatives, buying seed/corn and other commodities on credit, and sending their male relatives to the coal and salt mines in Pakistan to earn some cash. In meantime, traders were giving food on credit thinking people would have a harvest in July 1999. This 'generosity' stopped in July 1999 since the farmers failed to fully repay their loans. This autumn, between the high price of wheat and 24% fall in the afghani, food security has deteriorated.

50. Due to joint efforts by the assistance community in southern Afghanistan, approximately 400,000 people receive some kind of assistance. However, the drought has been increasingly severe. In particular, the drying up of the Arghandab River and the resultant poor horticulture harvest this autumn mean that the situation is worse now than it was six months ago.

51. WFP wheat, now reaching about 35 - 40,000 most severely affected and vulnerable households, including 25% of the population of Kandahar City, along with wheat imports Pakistan and Kazakhstan, has kept the wheat market more or less stable. Assessment of the joint assistance community indicates that wheat/food support needs to be increased overall, since the total coverage is not enough due to the increase in the number of vulnerable people.

52. Due to the drought, hand dug (unimproved) wells in the region are almost 100% dry. Residents are now relying on drilled wells. The karez system also continues to dry-up and in general is at about 20% of normal water levels. Since water is the source of electricity, the power supply situation has also steadily deteriorated. The region is faced by severe electrical load shedding, which is expected to increase.

53. Approximately 23,000 Baluch kuchi families are displaced in the region from their natural habitat, the Registan desert. They are situated in over one hundred settlements throughout the region where there is access to water. A few hundred families from Ghor province are also displaced into the region. The situation of these groups is worsening, and only about 1,500 families have been assisted so far. The kuchis had to leave behind most of their non-food and food items (livestock) in the desert in the beginning of the year, and in addition have lost large portions of their herds through death or sale. Access to day labour is extremely limited since the main labour season is over. Recent surveys by FAO have indicated that the kuchi men do not have sufficient funds to even cover their transportation expenses to the nearest urban centre in order to find day labour.

54. The assistance community in southern Afghanistan, in response to the severe drought situation, is jointly assisting the most severely affected population. Food relief support is currently being extended in free food distribution to the most severely affected; institutional feeding; food for work (used for improving water supply, sanitation, and shelter); food for asset creation; food for seed production; and food for repatriation. In total around 20,000 MT wheat have been disbursed to the most severely affected population since the beginning of the year.

55. Assistance to the IDPs and displaced kuchis in the region has been very limited. The joint Drought Task Force in Kandahar is now finalising a proposal for funding request for emergency assistance (food and non-food items) to the most severely affected 10,000 displaced families in the region.

56. In the water and sanitation sector, under the leadership of UNICEF, about 1,100 drinking water wells have been either rehabilitated or constructed. In addition, communities are being assisted in rehabilitating approximately 500 karezes and canals and in constructing micro check-dams.

57. The severity of the situation is expected to further deteriorate during the months ahead. Two main problems exist: scarcity of water and access to food. If no rain falls by the end of the year and in the beginning of the next year, emigration--so far of a limited nature--will rapidly increase. The continued indiscriminate drilling for production water in the region will further exacerbate the region's water problems.

Eastern Afghanistan

58. In eastern Afghanistan, relatively less affected by drought than other areas, the drought has exacerbated the overall situation and forced some people to leave their place of origin and became either refugees in Pakistan or seek shelter internally. With the border of Pakistan closed since 9 November, more than 400 displaced families have taken up residence in Jalalabad City.

59. The rainy season, which was supposed to start from mid-October, is late. This will certainly perpetuate the impact of the drought and may mean that more areas are affected. Mitigation activities are ongoing, including karez and road rehabilitation, cleaning springs and canals, digging wells, sanitation, preventative health, and food distribution.

60. Although the basic food items are available in local markets, people do not feel confident about the future due to the prevailing drought and the influx of IDPs in the region, particularly after the closure of the Pak-Afghan border. The combination of drought, inflation, unemployment, and IDPs is expected to have a negative impact on the overall food security situation.